Export of Indian Coffee

*462. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Coffee Board has engaged any consultants in order to regain its lost market;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to boost export of Indian Coffee?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Coffee Board engaged the services of a leading consultancy firm to formulate a Medium Term Export Strategy aimed at increasing exports of Indian Coffee. The Medium Term Export Strategy, *inter-alia*, identified the following key elements:

- Shifting of product mix from Robusta to Arabica.
- Ensuring a competitive landed price for Indian coffee by reducing growing costs.
- Maintaining consistency in the quality of export of coffee.
- Improving awareness of Indian coffee in target markets.

(c) In an effort to make Indian coffee exports more competitive, the Government of India brought down the export cess of coffee (which was prevailing at Rs. 500 per tonne) to 'zero' per tonne *w.e.f.* 16th March, 2005.

To boost exports of Indian coffee, the Coffee Board has been undertaking the following key initiatives under its Market Development Scheme during the Xth Plan period;

- Carrying out major communication initiatives in key overseas markets to enhance the image of Indian Coffee as well as to improve market share,
- Participating in important overseas trade fairs.
- Organizing buyer-seller meets and cupping sessions involving Indian exports and overseas buyers in key markets.

- Organizing annual cupping competition—'Flavour of India'—Fine Cup Award' to be adjudged by the international quality experts to select the best quality speciality coffees.
- Instituting of export awards to encourage exporters.

Implementation of NREG Act

*463. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) has started;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the mechanism and frequency of periodical monitoring of its implementation in the targeted States by Government;

(c) the details of the persons seeking jobs under NREGA and those duly given jobs in the course of the first two months of implementation of the Act, State-wise; and

(d) the nature of problems, if any, witnessed commonly/severally by the States in implementation of the NREGA during the initial period?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) 200 districts from all the States except Goa have been identified for implementation of the Act in the first phase. The Act has, however, not been made applicable in any of the Union Territories so far. The Act was implemented in 183 identified districts with effect from 2/2/06. In the two districts of Meghalaya, the Act has been implemented with effect from 1/4/06 due to bye-election in one of the parliamentary constituency which was held on 16th February, 2006. In the 3 identified districts of Jammu & Kashmir, the Act has been implemented as a scheme because Act as such it is not applicable to the State of Jammu & Kashmir in terms of Section 1 (2) of the Act. In the 12 districts of Maharashtra, the State Government has decided to amend its own Act so that the entitlements of the workers under the Central Act are ensured in the State scheme. The Central Government will share the expenditure in 12 identified districts of Maharashtra as per the NREG Act.